



## *News Release*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Department of General Services**

Contact: Dena Potter

Office: (804) 786-0282

Cell: (804) 356-5508

Email: [Dena.Potter@dgs.virginia.gov](mailto:Dena.Potter@dgs.virginia.gov)

### **Division of Capitol Police**

Contact: Joe Macenka

Office: (804) 786-2522

Cell: (804) 382-7447

Email: [JMacenka@dcp.virginia.gov](mailto:JMacenka@dcp.virginia.gov)

## **Capitol Square entry prohibited temporarily to prevent gathering amid COVID-19 pandemic**

*~ DGS, Capitol Police will continue to monitor assemblies and take appropriate actions when necessary ~*

**RICHMOND** – The Department of General Services, working with the Division of Capitol Police, temporarily prohibited entry into Capitol Square on Thursday to disrupt an unpermitted event that could have posed a risk to the public amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several groups promoted an event on Capitol Square Thursday to protest Governor Ralph Northam's Executive Order 53, which bans crowds of more than 10 people, and Executive Order 55, which directs Virginians to stay home through June 10 unless they must leave for essential services. The groups encouraged participants to hug and share food at the event.

As a crowd began to gather, DGS and Capitol Police closed gates to Capitol Square to prevent additional entry. Capitol Police directed those in attendance to adhere to the Governor's orders by not gathering in groups of more than 10. All in attendance complied.

Northam and public health officials, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), have encouraged the public

not to gather in groups in indoor and outdoor spaces to prevent exposure to and spread of COVID-19. The disease has killed over 200 and infected more than 6,800 in Virginia.

DGS and Capitol Police will continue to monitor gatherings on Capitol Square and take appropriate actions when necessary to protect the public.

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